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Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
TRSE-00 CU-02 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /081 W
----------061450Z 092183 /42
R 061351Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2226
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 0089

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SEDU, ET
SUBJ: RETROSPECTIVE ON ETHIOPIAN SCHOOLS

REF: A. 76 ADDIS ABABA 12246, B. 76 ADDIS ABABA 10559, C. 76
ADDIS ABABA 8856

SUMMARY: SITUATION IN ETHIOPIAN SCHOOLS SINCE THEIR REOPENING
FOUR MONTHS AGO HAS BEEN ALMOST UNNATURALLY QUIET IN CONTRAST
TO LONG-STANDING TRADITION OF STRIKES, DEMONSTRATIONS, AND
CLOSURES. ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS HAVE FOLLOWED PATTERN AS IN PAST
FREE OF ANY MAJOR PROBLEMS. SECONDARY SCHOOLS HAVE CAUSED MORE
PROBLEMS, BUT NOT SUFFICIENT TO STOP CLASSES. ADDIS ABABA U.
(AAU) SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED PORTION OF SCHOOL YEAR INTER-
RUPTED BY DEVELOPMENT THROUGHG PROGRESS CAMPAIGN (ZEMECHA). MINOR
LABOR PROBLEM LED TO RESIGNATION OF AAU PRESIDENT, BUT THERE SOME
SPECULATION THIS MERELY PRETEXT FOR PRESIDENT TO RESIGN. PERSISTENT
RUMOR OF ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (EPRP) POPULARITY
AMONG SOME TACHERS AND STUDENTS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY, WHILE PROBABLY
TRUE, HAS NOT APPRECIABLY HAMPERED EPMG POLICIES. IT
APPEARS PROCLAMATION ESTABLISHING SCHOOL SUPERVISORY COM-
MITTEE HAS CIRCUMSCRIBED POSSIBLE STUDENT-TEACHER DISRUP-
TIONS OF CLASSES. END SUMMARY.

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1. REOPENING OF SCHOOLS AFTER REVOLUTION DAY ANNIVERSARY
HAS POSED NO MAJOR PROBLEM TO EPMG, CONTRARY TO EXPECTATIONS
OF WIDESPREAD ANTI-GOVT ACTIONS. ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
WHICH WERE UNAFFECTED BY ZEMACHA HAVE REMAINED OPEN WITHOUT
ANY MAJOR CONFRONTATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND GOVT. NEW
HOLIDAY SCHEDULE CREATED IN DEC DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST
NON-CHRISTIAN ETHIOPIANS AS IN PAST. INSTEAD OF 2-WEEK VACATION

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PRECEEDING ETHIOPIAN CHRISTMAS, NOW ONLY DAY PRECEEDING HOLIDAY
AND HOLIDAY ITSELF GIVEN FOR VACATION. TWO WEEKS GRANTED IN
DEC AS NON-SECTARIAN HOLIDAY.

2. SITUATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS HAS PROVEN LESS STABLE, BUT
BY AND LARGE MANAGEABLE. NOV EXECTUIONS OF 27 PEOPLE, MAJORITY
OF WHOM WERE STUDENTS, SECONDARY SCHOOL CLASSES BOYCOTTED
IN ADDIS AND OTHER MAJOR TOWNS FOR 2-3 DAY MOURNING PERIOD.
DEMONSTRATION IN GONDAR, EARLY DEC REPORTEDLY RESULTED
IN DEATHS OF 11 OR 12 STUDENTS (REFTEL B). GONDAR HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS BOYCOTTED CLASSES FOR 3-DAY MOURNING PERIOD, BUT
RETURNED AFTERWARD WITH NO FURTHER INCIDENTS. IN LATE DEC,
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MAJOR TOWNS DID NOT ATTEND CLASSES
FOR 2-3 DAYS TO COMMEMORATE ANNIVERSARY OF STUDENTS MASSACRE 8
YEARS AGO. (THIS ANNIVERSARY HAS OFTEN BEEN EXCUSE FOR
VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS.) HOWEVER, THIS YEAR'S ANNIVERSARY
PASSED ONLY WITH STUDENTS PEACEFULLY NOT ATTENDING CLASSES.
GENERAL PROBLEMS PAST HIGH SCHOOL SEMERSTER INVOLVED UNDER-
STAFFING AND 3 SHIFTS OF CLASSES NECESSITATED BY FORMER
ZEMECHA PROGRAM. DESPITE SOME DIFFICULTIES, HIGH SCHOOL
SEMESTER COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY.

3. AAU, AFTER ZEMECHA CAMPAIGN HAD LEFT
IT DORMANT FOR TWO YEARS, COMPLETED UNFINISHED PORTION OF
SCHOOL YEAR WITHOUT MAJOR DISRUPTION. MINOR LABOR PROBLEM
BETWEEN ACTING AAU PRESIDENT DR. TAYE GULLILAT AND LABORERS
AT UNIVERSITY LED TO DR. TAYE'S RESIGNATION. INCIDENT IN-
VOLVED SCUFFLE BETWEEN TAYE AND LABORERS IN WHICH FORMER'S
GLASSES KNOWCKED OFF AND CLOTHES RUMPLED. MANY SPECULATED THIS
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INCIDENT MERELY PRETEXT ON HIS PART FOR RESIGNATION AFTER LONG
PERIOD OF UNEASINESS AS AAU PRESIDENT. DURI MOHAMMED, WHO
RECEIVED MA FROM BERKELEY 1959 AND IS CURRENTLYLECTURER AND
RESEARCHER IN ECONOMICS AT AAU, IS CHAIRING SCHOOLD BOARD MEETINGS
DURING INTERIM. HOWEVER, RILIABLE SOURCES BELIEVE HE UNLIKELY
TO BECOME NEXT AAU PRESIDENT. SPECULATION THAT NEW GOVERNING
STRUCTURE FOR AAU WILL BE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE TO INCLUDE
TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND LABORERS. FIRST NORMAL SEMESTER AT
UNIVERSITY TO BEGINJAN 10, WITH ENROLLMENT OF SOME 5000
STUDENTS ANTICIPATED.

4. SCHOOL PROCLAMATION ESTABLISHING SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE
(REFTEL A) HAS APPARENTLY CIRCUMSCRIBED STUDENT/TEACHER DE-
MONSTRATIONS. UNDER PROCLAMATION, COMMITTEES HAVE POWER
TO WARN SCHOOL WORKERS, TACHERS, AND STUDENTS, TO SUSPEND
THEM FROM WORK OR SCHOOL FOR NOT MORE THAN 15 DAYS, TO IM-
POSE FINES NOT EXCEEDING 2 MONTHS' PAY, TO DISMISS FROM SCHOOL
ANYONE WHO FAILS TO BE CORRECTED AFTER REPEATED WARNINGS AND
PUNISHMENT, AND TO HAVE DAMAGED SCHOOL PROPERTY REINSTATED

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OR REPLACED. AS A RESULT, LOCAL CONTROL EXERCISED THROUGH
EITHER PEASANTS' UR URBAN DWELLERS' ASSOCIATIONS APPEARS
TO BE EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE SO FAR. DESPITE ALLEGATIONS THAT
EPRP VERY POPULAR AMONG SOME TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, AND
APPEARANCE OF SOME EPRP PROPAGANDA ON CAMPUS IN LATE DEC.,
EPMG HAS BEEN ABLE TO CONTAIN THEIR ACTIVITIES SUCCESSFULLY.
(EMB POUCHING OCT SCHOOL PROCLAMATION).

5. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH DEGREE OF REPRESSION BEING EMPLOYED BY
EPMG TO KEEP SCHOOLS OPEN, SUCH MEASURES APPEAR TO HAVE SUPPORT AMONG
MANY SECTORS OF POPULATION, ESPECIALLY PEASANT AND PRO-GOVT
ELEMENTS. ABILITY OF EPMG MAINTAIN REGULAR SCHOOL SCHEDULE IS
ACHIEVEMENT FORMER EMPEROR'S REGIME COULD NOT ACCOMPLISH DURING
ITS LAST FIVE YEARS. NEXT MAJOR TEST MAY COME WITH RESUMPTION
OF CLASSES AT UNIVERSITY IN MID-JAN WHEN UNIVERSITY WILL
BE OPENED TO STUDENTS OTHER THAN THOSE COMPLETING THEIR LAST
TERM PRIOR TO GRADUATION AND WHO MAY BE LESS IMMEDIATELY
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MOTIVATED TO STICK TO THEIR STUDIES. MOREOVER,
THEY CAN HARDLY BE REASSURED OVER GROWING RUMORS OF REVIVAL
OF ZEMECHA PROGRAM, OR NEW SCALED DOWN VERSION THEREOF, IN
LATE SPRING OR SUMMER.
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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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